

Virtual Meeting

MINUTES¹

Thursday, 17 September 2020

ATTENDANCE:

Members Present: Yolanda Sonnier, Rev. Delavago Scruggs, Andrea Nunez, Cheryl Mattis (for DCRS Director Jackie Scott), Alicia Altamirano, Andrew Heiliger, Chuck Chandler, Donna Bauer, Jay Prager (for HC Department of Health/Maura Rossman), Leslie Lampieri, Lisa Davis, Monica Krebs, Samantha Samuel-Nakka, Sara Cochran, Sara Smoley, Savanna Khoury, Jessica Epps, Jennifer Ritter (for State's Attorney Rich Gibson), Leslie Petak, Jon Steuernagle, Dina Ward, Dave Francis (for HCPD Chief Lisa Myers, Stephen Liggett-Creel

Members Absent: Lt. Eric Kruhm, HCPD

Others in Attendance: Carolyn Leuba, Cathie Leimenstoll, Suellen Seigel, Susan Allen.

MEETING SUMMARY:

1. MEETING OPEN

- a. 1:00 pm; Ms. Yolanda Sonnier, Chair, Howard County Human Trafficking Prevention Coordination Council (HTPCC), opened the meeting by welcoming committee members and introducing Vice Chair, Rev. Del Scruggs.

2. Establishment of Quorum

- a. The Roll was taken: Twenty-Two Committee members were in attendance. Ms. Sonnier declared the Committee was in quorum and brought the meeting to order.

3. Consideration of the July 2020 Meeting Minutes

- a. Ms. Sonnier entered the 22 JULY 2020 Committee minutes and opened for discussion. Lisa Davis motioned to accept the minutes as written and Monica Krebs seconded the motion. A voice vote of official members was taken and approved without opposition or abstentions.

4. Presentations

- a. Andrea Nunez in Partnership with HopeWorks: Andrea Nunez played a clip from the documentary, 'Very Young Girls' to guide conversation about how the council wants to work with survivors in the future.

Savanna Khoury led discussion to determine what the council hopes to gain from survivor engagement. Ms. Khoury noted the importance of including survivors as a member of the community.

At Chair Yolanda Sonnier's suggestion, the Council discussed more active survivor involvement, in the future, possibly through a panel of survivors.



Jay Prager expressed this would be beneficial to drafting legislation and policy initiatives to have insight from individuals who have lived the experience. Mr. Prager added it would be very effective to consult with survivors to assist with trainings to make feel more relevant to Howard County.

Sarah Cochran and Donna Bauer also voiced support, noting that the council could learn from survivors what in their experience was or was not helpful and how could the council improve within those areas of need.

Rev. Del Scruggs expressed the long-term benefit for the council to have representation by a survivor leader to gain insight and guidance. Rev. Scruggs suggested the survivor could assist with the grant application process through informing how to write and types of resources to seek. He stressed the importance of doing so with great sensitivity and empowering survivors to take a seat at the council.

Carolyn Leuba (non-member) expressed the benefit to learning how survivors became victims and look for commonalities to better understand the process in which they were exploited.

Monica Krebs shared the Polaris report, *On-Ramps, Intersections, and Exit Routes: A Roadmap for Systems and Industries to Prevent and Disrupt Human Trafficking²*, for more information to support understanding of systems and how they lead to exploitation.

Yolanda Sonnier clarified next steps were to reach out to a couple people to gauge interest in speaking with the Coordination Council. Following the conversation coordinate with Andrea Nunez and possibly determine if there would be an interest in joining the November meeting.

Cheryl Mattis discussed the budget available to the council as well as provided a reminder of the two designated council positions available to survivors.

Sara Cochran stated that it is highly recommended for task forces to have survivors serve as professionals and that they receive payment as a mark of respect. Ms. Cochran shared a resource with council members, 'Girls Like Us' by Rachel Lloyd³ to support understanding of how individuals became victims and how they got out.

Samantha Samuel-Nakka agreed best practice is to consider payment for survivor services. Ms. Samuel-Nakka emphasized the importance for the council to think about how to make the county supportive to their long-term. She noted there is a suggested figure for compensation recommended by the Maryland Survivor Network.

Andrea Nunez shared that Maryland Survivor Network leader, Shamere McKenzie and US DOJ OVC advisors agree that the new, generally acceptable lowest rate for compensating survivors leaders for their time and expertise is the \$81.25 an hour, emphasizing the advice she has received from survivor leaders like Ms. Kenzie, and Ms. Stacey Jewell, is that it's of vital importance to discuss and agree on all relevant terms and conditions up front.

5. July – August Events and Old Business

- a. HTPCC Rules of Procedure: Ms. Sonnier entered the Rules of Procedure and opened for discussion. Monica Krebs motioned to approve as written and Jennifer Ritter seconded the motion. A voice vote of official members was taken and approved without opposition or abstentions.
- b. Focused Committees: Ms. Sonnier encouraged members who have not joined a focused committee to email Ms. Nunez directly with the committee(s) that they would like to join.
- c. Training, Outreach and Partnership Committee Update: Rev. Del Scruggs, Committee Chair, provided an update from the August 31, 2020 committee meeting. The committee has focused outreach efforts to the faith community. There is a virtual Meet and Greet scheduled for October 6, 2020 for the faith community to learn about human trafficking and how Howard County is addressing the issue. Rev. Del Scruggs thanked Andrea for her assistance in organizing the event.

Rev. Del Scruggs shared that Ms. Nunez ordered the 'Faith in Action' kit from Shared Hope International to support the overall work of the committee. The kit includes brochures, booklets, and a thumb drive containing information for women, men, and youth populations.

Leslie Petak and Sara Cochran asked for clarification regarding the inclusion of civic organizations for the October Meet and Greet event.

Rev. Del Scruggs explained the event was originally set up for the faith community then grew to include civic organizations. Rev. Del Scruggs noted the main purpose of the event was for the community to learn about the Human Trafficking Prevention Coordination Council.

- d. Real Estate Committee Update: Andrea Nunez provided the report in absence of committee chair, Cassie Dorsey. The committee has agreed on immediate needs such as attending sales meetings to raise awareness about human trafficking among existing networks (i.e., agents, brokers, inspectors, etc.). Ms. Nunez discussed the creation of a small pocket card with information and important numbers, such as the National Human Trafficking Hotline, that could be given to agents.

Ms. Nunez described the long-term goal of the committee to create a robust training to add human trafficking to the curriculum offered for continuing education credits. The committee is creating an outline to submit to Howard County Association of Realtors (HCAR) for training approval. Once approved, the training will be offered in-person.

- e. Legislation and Policy Update: Monica Krebs, Committee Chair, provided an update from the September 10, 2020 committee meeting. The committee will focus on monitoring state legislation to draft recommendations and to bring forth new ideas and initiatives to improve the state and/ or county's response to human trafficking. One idea is to fix the discrepancy between state and federal guidelines on registering as a sex offender following human trafficking



convictions. The committee is conducting research to determine other state's approaches and best practices.

Ms. Krebs shared efforts to increase direct outreach to labor trafficking victims, including H2B and H2A workers throughout the County. These efforts will likely not take place until 2021.

Ms. Krebs stated the importance of continuing to educate the public on what to look for and how to intervene appropriately if they suspect human trafficking. Ms. Krebs noted efforts by the Howard County Office of Human Trafficking Prevention to contribute to this effort by updating the county website to provide readily available information to the public, as well as plans to train the entire county workforce to recognize signs of human trafficking.

Ms. Krebs expressed the committee's request for survivors to provide guidance on how to engage positively with survivors. In addition, for survivors to provide guidance when discussing legislation.

f. Medical/ Hospital Committee: No update. The committee has not conducted its initial meeting due to scheduling conflicts.

g. Office of Human Trafficking Prevention (OHTP) Update: Andrea Nunez, Manager OHTP, shared her office has created a long-term workplan. Ms. Nunez expressed an overall goal is to collaborate with the council around interests within that workplan.

Ms. Nunez described efforts to raise awareness by generating new video content, creating public service announcements and updating the office website to include more resources for the public to access. Furthermore, Ms. Nunez stated she is working towards training the entire county workforce, by department. The goal is to have training available by the end of the year.

Ms. Nunez reminded the council that January is human trafficking awareness month. The TOP Committee and full Coordination Council are encouraged to think of ideas for an event/ initiative.

Ms. Nunez noted that she hopes to hear back on two grants by the next full meeting.

6. New Business

a. Online Self-Training Requirements: Andrea Nunez, described the online self-training requirements for all committee members. The training will ensure all members have baseline knowledge pertaining to human trafficking. The *Human Trafficking 101* training⁴ offered by the University of Maryland School of Social Work is an online educational format that is self-paced. All committee members are required to complete the training prior to the next committee meeting in November. Once complete, members are to email Ms. Nunez directly to confirm.

7. Announcements and Events of Importance

a. October 6: Human Trafficking Prevention Council of Howard County Virtual Meet & Greet for representatives of our faith community and civic organizations, 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm.

b. October 20: Virtual Discussion with LGBTQ Community relating to Human Trafficking, 6:00 pm.



8. Additional Items for Discussion

- a. Ms. Sonnier thanked HopeWorks for continuing to be involved and educating the council.
- b. Sara Cochran shared information pertaining to a local case regarding a man recently arrested and charged with human trafficking in Jessup, MD.

Jennifer Ritter, stated that it is an ongoing investigation and is unable share any additional information regarding the case at this time.

- c. Rev. Del Scruggs shared a recent case from neighboring Anne Arundel County that had a drug and sex trafficking connection through a local hotel.

9. Next Coordination Council Meeting Date(s)

- a. The next meeting of the Howard County Human Trafficking Prevention Coordination Council will be held November 19, 2020. The meeting will be virtual.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

- a. The meeting concluded.

Minutes were drafted by: Briana Davis

Yolanda Sonnier
Chair



Notes:

- 1) The meeting was conducted virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2) The Polaris report can be accessed at, [On-Ramps, Intersections, and Exit Routes: A Roadmap for Systems and Industries to Prevent and Disrupt Human Trafficking](#).
- 3) 'Girls Like Us' by Rachel Lloyd. For orders, consider visiting the Girls Educational & Mentoring Services (GEMS) [website](#). All proceeds go directly back to the organization.
- 4) University of Maryland School of Social Work, *Human Trafficking 101* is a self-guided training that can be accessed online, <https://www.ssw.umaryland.edu/pari/resources/elearning-units/>.

Attachments:

- A) Meeting Notes: HTPCC Meeting; 22 July 2020
- B) HTPCC Rules of Procedures